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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT BUSH TRAVEL TO BRAZIL; WESTERN
HEMISPHERE: VENEZUELA, CHAVEZ'S REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
INFLUENCE; SAO PAULO

11. "Chances And Obstacles Of A Positive Agenda With The US"

Business-oriented Valor Economico (3/13) editorialized: "President Bush's goal today is to recover his popularity in the final half of his second term, as well as to recover some maneuvering room before Republican and Democratic Congress members and improve as best he can the Republican Party's electoral chances. Bush's selective tour in Latin America is part of this forced strategic realignment, in which Brazil has a relevant role to perform as became evident in the US President's visit to Sao Paulo.... President Bush has given international visibility to the Brazilian ethanol program.... Bush's intention is to become free from dependence on oil supplies from chronically instable nations, such as those in the Middle East, or those ruled by hostile governments, like Venezuela.... The exchange of fossil fuels for ethanol is feasible and necessary to reduce the effects of gas emissions that contribute to global warming - something that Bush refuses to consider.... But the good [USG] intentions have been tied to the old US protectionism, whose barriers increase the price of imported ethanol by 46%.... There is room for productive understanding both in regards to the US policy for ethanol and the Doha Round negotiations. Without great expectations, but with the necessary pragmatism, it is possible to advance in this path. This may become clearer after President Lula's upcoming visit to the US later this month."

12. "Positive Agenda And Subservience"

Former Brazilian Ambassador in Washington Rubens Barbosa commented in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (3/13): "President Bush's visit to Brazil helped the GOB to expand its relationship with the US. Such an evolution is welcome and cannot and should not be considered subservience to the US as the attitude of those who urge this 'renewal' has been unfairly classified by the GOB.... We hope that beginning with this adjustment, which is still in rhetorical stage, more pragmatic measures will prevail in the formulation of Brazil's foreign policy and trade negotiations."

13. "Colonel Chavez's Axis"

Center-right national circulation daily O Estado de S. Paulo (3/13) maintained: "The Caracas-Buenos Aires-La Paz axis that Colonel Hugo Chavez believes he is creating is not promising. The Venezuelan caudillo has only one advantage: his nation's treasury is full of petrodollars that he does not hesitate in distributing in the process of luring allies. But many factors conspire against him. First, his 'Bolivarian' project, even vague as it was, had a

reasonably romantic character that could attract ingenuous followers. But the evolution of that project, the '21st Century socialism,' is nonsense that frightens all those who become acquainted with it. Second, the Colonel has been showing for a long time his dictatorial vocation, and not all Latin American populist leaders are willing to follow him. Finally, Hugo Chavez is a big mouth boaster who in his crazy speeches spreads insults and aggression in all directions - and as a result of this behavior, causes constraints that not all 'compaeros' are willing to tolerate.... Chavez believes that all Latin America has latent a germ of anti-Americanism, and he is trying to exploit this characteristic. Actually, he created a foreign enemy to have a pretext - which is classic in the history of dictatorships - to eliminate fundamental rights and civil liberties of his people."

McMullen